

TRAINING PACKAGE 2

– Service Design

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Theme 5.3.1. Concept Design in Service Production

What is Design Concept?

Examples in Case "Suupirssi"



What is a Design Concept?

- **Concept** – a general idea used to formulate a plan
 - A design concept is the idea behind a design
 - It's how you plan on solving the design problem in front of you
 - It's the underlying logic, thinking, and reasoning for how you'll design a product or website.
 - Concept will lead to designer choices in functions, form, space, color and so on.
 - It'll choose your [aesthetic](#) and determine your grid
 - Every design decision you make will fall back on your concept for direction.
 - Your design concept becomes the framework for all your design decisions.
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We can think of design concepts in two ways

- **Verbal** – the verbal parts of your concept might be words you use to describe the site
 - For example your design concept might be one of sophisticated elegance
 - Verbal concepts tend toward the abstract
 - They're focused on the message your design is to communicate.
 - **Visual** – the visual parts of your concept might be a specific image or color scheme
 - It might be drawings, sketc, an idea to use circles prominently...
 - Visual concepts tend to be a little more concrete
 - They should come from the verbal part of your concept. [Visual concepts](#) are focused more on the how of conveying your message.
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- It is typical to begin forming a concept verbally
- At times a concept comes visually
- This usually happens after doing some verbal conceptualizing, though before writing it down
- Generally verbal concepts come before visual concepts as the visual is really about how you'll communicate the verbal, though it likely depends on the individual and how you think best.



What to do Before Creating a Design Concept?

- *Developing a design concept* is something of an individual process
 - *There's no one right way to generate an idea and what works for one won't necessarily work for another*
 - *However there are parts to the process that everyone should go through.*
 - ***Defining the problem*** – *You can't solve a problem without knowing what that problem is*
 - *Before developing a concept for a site you need to talk to your client and ask questions about the client's brand, their customers, their general market, and their goals for the site.*
 - ***Research*** – *Your client won't be able to tell you everything you want to know*
 - *You'll have to do your own research into their industry looking at competing sites and trying to understand more about their market.*
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- Both of the above should get you thinking and begin the idea generation process
- The next part is up to you
- I mentioned a few ways you can [gather inspiration and generate ideas](#) last week, so I won't list them again here.
- Instead I'll offer some of the questions you should be asking yourself and your client.
 - *What is your client's [brand](#)?*
 - *Who are your client's customers?*
 - *What are the requirements for the site?*
 - *What is the objective of the site?*
 - *What's the budget for the project?*
 - *The answers to each of the above should give you ideas for your design concept*



- For example Rolls Royce and Volkswagen have two different brands with different types of customers
 - The goals of their respective sites might be the same in some places (to sell cars) and different in others (history of the car vs. technical specs)
 - Knowing these things should start to point you toward a concept for either site
 - The list of questions above is hardly an exhaustive list
 - You should be asking as many questions as you can in order to understand as much as possible about your client, your client's business, their customers, and what they want from the design
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- When researching the client's industry you should be asking yourself some questions as well:
- **What is consistent across sites in the industry?**
- **What part of the market is being underserved?**
- **What are your client's unique selling points?**
- **What kind of imagery, copy, etc. resonates with the market?**
- **What other interests does the market have in common?**
- Again not an exhaustive list, but hopefully enough to get you thinking of your own questions to ask. Your goal, as with the questions you ask your client, is to learn as much as you can about your client's business, this time in comparison to the competition

General Process For Creating a Concept

- Design process always begins with the 2 items mentioned above, **asking questions of the client and researching the industry.**
- When talking with clients always listen for the words they use to describe their business and their customers. They won't always give you these words by directly asking for them, but there are other ways to [get the information from them.](#)



Ask indirect questions – The clients will often reveal things about themselves and their businesses when talking about other things.

Listen actively – Sometimes the information you want is between the lines and you'll have to listen actively for it.

Get to know your clients as people – The more you know them outside their business the better you'll know their business

Speak their language – Stay away from industry jargon and use the words your clients use.



- Look for descriptive words like elegant, affordable, friendly, dynamic
- Abstract words that convey meaning about the client's brand
- Write these words down while talking and think more about them later
- These words help form the verbal concept for the design
- Again you have to be prepared to listen
- The words you're looking for are often not going to come in response to a direct question
- When researching the industry keep the same words in mind and look for others





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